

Constitution to allow States to pass laws outlawing abuse of our flag. We are proud of the American flag and we want to protect it.

The issue of flag desecration has been with us for too long. As you know, in 1984, a protester at the Republican National Convention in Houston was arrested for burning the flag which was against the law in Texas. Five years later the Supreme Court struck down the Texas law and the offender was acquitted. In 1990, Congress passed a bill to remedy this situation, but it too was struck down as unconstitutional. So now our only choice is to pass this legislation, amend the U.S. Constitution and allow the States to pass their own laws to correct this problem.

As a veteran, I feel particularly strong about this proposal. Many men and women throughout our Nation's history have sacrificed their lives so that we could enjoy the freedoms we now have. The flag is a symbol of this country and a tribute to those who have protected our Nation through the years. To allow individuals to desecrate this symbol for petty purposes is to cheapen the country for which it stands. I find it extremely offensive that laws cannot be passed by States to prohibit this kind of behavior.

This bill is not meant to restrict the first amendment rights guaranteed to all Americans. I strongly believe that individuals and groups must be able to speak their minds on issues that concern them. But that does not mean burning the flag. I feel flag desecration goes beyond freedom of expression. It is an abuse of the U.S. Constitution and the freedoms that great document provides.

Our proposal is not a heavy-handed Government mandate. We want to give States the ability to pass the laws they deem necessary. Forty-six States have already passed resolutions which outlaw the desecration of the flag. Alabama joined these ranks in 1991. I think it is time for Congress to take the initiative to correct this situation once and for all. I urge my colleagues to pass this legislation and start the process for adding this historic amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1158, EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE AND RESCISSIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1995

HON. KAREN L. THURMAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 21, 1995

Mrs. THURMAN. Mr. Speaker, last month, the Appropriations Committee met to consider offsets to pay for a \$5.6 billion supplemental spending for the California earthquake relief. The committee cut more than \$17.3 billion, including \$208 million for six veterans health clinics and other medical equipment. One of the clinics targeted for elimination is in my district of Gainesville, FL. Mr. Speaker, the immediate question that comes to mind is: To what will the remaining \$12 billion rescinded from the appropriations bills be applied? Many theories have been advanced, but most of them certainly indicate that vital programs for children, the elderly, and other vulnerable citi-

zens are being cut simply to provide tax breaks for the rich.

I came to the floor today hoping to offer an amendment that would restore the \$208 million rescinded from the veterans' health care budget, but because of the restrictive nature of this rule my amendment would be out of order.

My amendment would have targeted six actual pork projects and cut down on wasteful Government spending, while protecting the security of veterans who in many cases have risked their lives in defense of this Nation. The six projects targeted in my amendment included unauthorized courthouses and a Tokamak Reactor Energy Program which would cost taxpayers \$2.2 billion in the coming years.

The six outpatient clinics that would have been restored by my amendment are a critical part of the VA's plan to move from delivering costly inpatient care to delivering cost-effective outpatient care. According to the VA officials in my district in Gainesville, existing space deficiencies currently prevent the medical center from offering care in a timely manner. These projects would provide better health care to more veterans at less cost to the taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Committee on Rules is not protecting the security of our vulnerable citizens. They are not interested in going after the real pork. The rule they have set provides for only further rescissions in what the Appropriations Committee considers pork, and not what the average American knows is pork and Government waste. Furthermore, they are denying Democratic Members the opportunity to offer amendments that would get the job done. Mr. Speaker, this issue really comes down to a matter of priorities: Are we going to forsake the many men and women who have risked their lives in defense of this Nation, simply to provide tax subsidies for the rich? I for one, will not retreat on the promise we have made our veterans, and I urge my colleagues to stand firm and oppose this gag rule.

EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE AND RESCISSIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1995

SPEECH OF

HON. THOMAS W. EWING

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 15, 1995

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 1158) making emergency supplemental appropriations for additional disaster assistance and making rescissions for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1995, and for other purposes:

Mr. EWING. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of H.R. 1158 and H.R. 1159 and to commend Chairman LIVINGSTON and the Appropriations Committee for all their hard work on these two supplemental appropriations bills. It is truly a new era when the Appropriations Committee demands that supplemental appropriations bills, emergency or otherwise, be paid for with offsetting spending cuts.

No doubt, each Member of this body would like to change certain provisions of these bills, but these rescissions are applied in a balanced and fair manner. Furthermore, H.R. 1159 recommends several important policy corrections.

I am particularly pleased the committee included language that allows HUD to waive the one-for-one public housing replacement requirement when public housing is no longer habitable and in need of demolition. This has been an ongoing problem in my congressional district.

The city of Danville, IL has been trying to receive approval to demolish the decaying and vacant Carver Park housing project for some time. Despite unanimous public support for the project's demolition and orders from the city government, Federal law has prevented the demolition of this dangerous and environmentally hazardous property.

I am also pleased the committee has taken action to prevent President Clinton from enforcing his Executive order prohibiting companies from permanently replacing striking workers. Our Nation's present labor negotiation system is balanced and fair for both labor and management. Each side faces consequences for their actions which serve as an incentive to bargain in good faith. The President's Executive order would alter the current balance.

Last, the President's Executive order is an effort to usurp congressional authority and should be overturned by this Congress. Major changes to our Nation's labor law should not be instituted without congressional approval.

Again, I thank the committee for acting to restore balance to our Nation's labor law and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1158 and H.R. 1159.

COMMON SENSE LEGAL STANDARDS REFORM ACT OF 1995

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 9, 1995

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 956) to establish legal standards and procedures for product liability litigation, and for other purposes:

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Chairman, on March 10, the House passed H.R. 956, the so-called Common Sense Product Liability and Legal Reform Act of 1995. Unfortunately, the final bill distinguishes itself by not having enough to do with product liability reform and having very little to do with common sense. The bill is an extreme measure that makes sweeping changes in the Nation's legal system that go far beyond the scope of fair and balanced product liability reform. It protects wrongdoers at the expense of injured individuals. It excludes procedural safeguards designed to put U.S. companies on a more equal footing with foreign corporations. It creates extreme and rigid rules that fail to account for circumstances involving gross misconduct or severe and permanent injuries. It fails to simplify current law and creates a complex and confusing jurisdictional puzzle.